

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method comprising:
  - 5 storing one or more messages on a mail server, wherein each message is associated with an index time;
    - 10 performing a full backup by storing each message on a backup medium;
    - storing a backup time associated with the full backup;
    - storing one or more additional messages on the mail server, wherein each additional message is associated with an index time;
    - 15 performing a partial backup by storing selected messages on the backup medium dependent upon a difference between the index time associated with each message and the backup time.
- 15 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the partial backup is performed by backing up each message that includes an index time that is dated after the backup time.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein each message on the mail server is contained in a mail folder object.
  - 20 4. The method of claim 3, wherein storing the backup time comprises modifying a data member of the mail folder object, wherein the data member is a defined parameter of the mail folder object.
  - 25 5. The method of claim 4, wherein the data member is defined by a manufacturer of the mail server.
  6. The method of claim 4, wherein the mail server is a Microsoft Exchange server, and wherein the data member is a PR\_LAST\_FULL\_BACKUP property.

7. A method comprising:

performing a full backup of a mail folder object on a mail server, wherein performing a full backup comprises:

5 storing a time the full backup begins as a backup time in the mail folder object, and

transferring one or more messages in the mail folder object dated before the backup time to a backup medium;

performing a partial backup of the mail folder object, wherein performing the partial

10 backup comprises:

storing a time the partial backup begins as a partial backup time, and

transferring one or more messages in the mail folder object dated before the partial backup time and dated after the backup time to the backup medium.

15 8. The method of claim 7, wherein performing a partial backup further comprises storing the partial backup time as the backup time in the mail folder object.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein storing the backup time comprises modifying a data member of the mail folder object, wherein the data member is a defined parameter of  
20 the mail folder object.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the mail server is a Microsoft Exchange server, and wherein the data member is a PR\_LAST\_FULL\_BACKUP property.

25 11. A system comprising:

a mail server operable to store one or more messages, wherein each message is associated with an index time;

a backup medium;

a backup application, wherein said backup application is operable to perform a full backup, wherein a full backup comprises storing each message on said backup medium, and storing a backup time associated with said full backup; and

wherein said backup application is further operable to perform a partial backup,  
5 wherein a partial backup comprises storing selected messages on the backup medium dependent upon a difference between the index time associated with each message and the backup time.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein the backup application is operable to perform  
10 said partial backup by backing up each message that includes an index time that is dated after the backup time.

13. The system of claim 11 further comprising one or more mail folder objects, wherein each of said mail folder objects is operable to contain one or more messages.

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14. The system of claim 13, wherein each mail folder object comprises a data member, wherein the data member is a defined parameter of the mail folder object and wherein said backup application is operable to store the backup time in said data member.

20 15. The system of claim 14, wherein the data member is defined by a manufacturer of the mail server.

16. The system of claim 14, wherein the mail server is a Microsoft Exchange server, and wherein the data member is a PR\_LAST\_FULL\_BACKUP property.

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17. A system comprising:  
a mail server operable to store one or more messages in a mail folder object;  
a backup medium;

a backup application, wherein said backup application is operable to perform a full backup on the mail folder object, wherein performing a full backup comprises:

storing a time the full backup begins as a backup time in the mail folder object, and

5 transferring one or more messages in the mail folder object dated before  
the backup time to the backup medium; and

wherein said backup application is further operable to perform a partial backup of the mail folder object, wherein performing the partial backup comprises:

storing a time the partial backup begins as a partial backup time, and

transferring one or more messages in the mail folder object dated before the partial backup time and dated after the backup time to the backup medium.

18. The system of claim 17, wherein said backup application is further operable to  
15 performing a partial backup by storing the partial backup time as the backup time in the  
mail folder object.

19. A computer readable medium including program instructions executable to implement a method comprising:

20        storing one or more messages on a mail server, wherein each message is  
                associated with an index time;  
                performing a full backup by storing each message on a backup medium;  
                storing a backup time associated with the full backup;  
                storing one or more additional messages on the mail server, wherein each  
25        additional message is associated with an index time;  
                performing a partial backup by storing selected messages on the backup  
                medium dependent upon a difference between the index time associated with each  
                message and the backup time.

20. The computer readable medium of claim 19 wherein the partial backup is performed by backing up each message that includes an index time that is dated after the backup time.

5 21. The computer readable medium of claim 19, wherein each message on the mail server is contained in a mail folder object.

22. The computer readable medium of claim 21, wherein storing the backup time comprises modifying a data member of the mail folder object, wherein the data member is  
10 a defined parameter of the mail folder object.

23. A computer readable medium including program instructions executable to implement a method comprising:  
15 performing a full backup of a mail folder object on a mail server, wherein performing a full backup comprises:

storing a time the full backup begins as a backup time in the mail folder object,  
and

transferring one or more messages in the mail folder object dated before the backup time to a backup medium;

20 performing a partial backup of the mail folder object, wherein performing the partial backup comprises:

storing a time the partial backup begins as a partial backup time, and  
transferring one or more messages in the mail folder object dated before the partial backup time and dated after the backup time to the backup medium.

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24. The computer readable medium of claim 23, wherein performing a partial backup further comprises storing the partial backup time as the backup time in the mail folder object.